

HOUSE BILL 2665

By West

AN ACT to name a bridge spanning Stones River on U.S. Highway 70 (Lebanon Pike) in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County in honor of the late Bob Sheehan.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those exemplary citizens who contributed significantly to the moral and social fabric of their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessean is more deserving of this honor than the late Robert Chalker "Bob" Sheehan, who served his country valiantly as a soldier, prisoner-of-war, and member of America's Greatest Generation during World War II; and

WHEREAS, after being drafted by the United States Army in 1943, Mr. Sheehan was stationed in England and assigned to the crew of "Little Audrey," a B-24 Liberator Heavy Bomber; and

WHEREAS, on September 27, 1944, as Little Audrey's crew attempted their 13th mission with their targets set on the railroad yards in Kassel, Germany, their B-24 was shot down by a concentrated German attack; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sheehan was subsequently captured by the Germans and endured eight months of indescribable hardship as a prisoner-of-war, including the Eastern Theater Death March that spanned 86 days and over 600 miles during one of the coldest winters in German history; and

WHEREAS, liberated by Allied forces less than two weeks before the German surrender, Mr. Sheehan returned home to attend Auburn University, from which he graduated with honors in 1948; and

WHEREAS, in his professional life, Mr. Sheehan rendered 36 years of astute and devoted service to BellSouth, most of such tenure being spent in Nashville, before taking a much deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, he was also a public-spirited Nashvillian of the highest order, and he contributed significantly to various causes that were close to his heart, including the YMCA, Boy Scouts of America, Meals on Wheels, Donelson - Hermitage Neighborhood Association, and Tulip Grove Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, an avid runner, Mr. Sheehan was the only person in the over-80 category to complete the 2005 Music City Half Marathon; he was 82 at the time; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to name a certain bridge near the very green space in Donelson and Hermitage that he helped preserve to honor Mr. Sheehan's memory and to permanently commemorate his life of purpose and commitment; now, therefore, BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the bridge spanning Stones River on U. S. Highway 70 (Lebanon Pike) in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County is hereby designated the "Bob Sheehan Memorial Bridge" as a lasting tribute to an accomplished human being who was much beloved by his family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Bob Sheehan Memorial Bridge" .

SECTION 3. It is the sense of this general assembly that the pedestrian bridge spanning Lebanon Pike (U. S. Highway 70) and connecting to the Stones River Greenway - Kohl's Trailhead in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County should be designated the "Elmer Disspayne, Sr. Memorial Bridge".

SECTION 4. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 5. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 6. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.